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CRITIQUES OF SOME RECENT BOOKS ON INTELLIGENCE

A STUDY OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE. By General *Cheng Chieh-min*. (Taipei: Kuo-chia An-ch'uan-ch'u. 1958. Pp. 706.)

This work, whether or not it was so intended, is a summation of the experience and studies which have made General Cheng an authority in his field. While in substance it contains little that has not been presented elsewhere, its Chinese point of view gives a fresh perspective to familiar subjects. The author's background includes extensive research into Western thought, philosophic and military, from the writings of the ancient Greeks to training publications of the United States Army; but it also includes a solid grounding in Chinese thought and strategy from Lao-tse and Confucius to Mao Tse-tung and Chiang Kai-shek. Clausewitz and Jomini, Lenin and Liddell Hart, Toynbee and Sherman Kent are seen in a new light when interpreted through the thinking of Hsün-tzu and Mencius, Sun-tzu and Szu-ma Kuang, Sun Yat-sen and Chiang.

The author, at the age of 60, in poor health and in semi-retirement, is still Director of the National Security Bureau, the highest intelligence agency in the Nationalist Government. A graduate of the second class of the Whampoa Military Academy in 1925, he studied in Moscow and Western Europe, served as combat commander and general staff officer in China, and had liaison duties with various Allied commands during World War II. He has been consistently close to the Generalissimo, a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Kuomintang, Vice and Deputy Minister of National Defense, Director of Military Intelligence, Director of the Office of Mainland Operations, and a member of the President's Advisory Committee on Strategy. He spent 1957 in "a year of convalescence," revising and expanding his two previous works on intelligence into the present study.

General Cheng states that the purpose of his book, designed for the Chinese military community, is to correct long-standing misapprehensions about the nature of intelligence work, and to arouse interest or furnish guidance in a sadly neglected field. He proposes to take up in order "all questions connected with military intelligence" with a view to establishing a com-

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plete and sound foundation for those who may be called upon to work as intelligence officers. Considerations of security and limitations of space, however, force him to gloss over details of intelligence organization and specific techniques of application.

He has nevertheless achieved a comprehensive study of the huge field marked out for treatment, embracing national policy, the nature of intelligence, national strategic intelligence, military strategic intelligence, combat intelligence, counterintelligence, and psychological warfare, and including specifics on strategems, signal intelligence, the intelligence process, and intelligence training. He draws a thousand examples from as many sources—Hannibal's campaigns, the Napoleonic era, the two world wars, and every stage of Chinese history. He sometimes yields to a passion for categorizing and occasionally belabors seemingly obvious points; but such shortcomings seem inevitable in the light of his announced purpose to fill a void in the Chinese literature on intelligence. They are more than offset by the insights he gives into Nationalist Chinese ideas of national policy and strategy and the role of intelligence in their formulation and execution.

The author's discussion of such matters as the function of intelligence, its several types, the stages of the intelligence process and their interrelations, or intelligence training and its supervision follows generally the lines of standard Western works on the subject. More stimulating, to a Westerner at any rate, is his development of the concept of intelligence as the basis for effective strategems and for economical victory, the foundation of every type of activity in cold or hot war, and so the tool without which no adequate decision can be made, no determined policy executed. Here the argument is peculiarly Chinese.

General Cheng himself feels that he is taking a traditionally Chinese view, as opposed to Western glorification of power and naked force, when he says, quoting President Chiang, "War is based essentially on benevolence, though its methods are savage; war has peace for its end, though its means are terrible—even barbaric." He thus considers war the last-ditch defense of the people's welfare, to be waged only when there is no other means of safeguarding the welfare of the people in a "peace which is the external manifestation of benevolence." But even

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victory in war, he emphasizes, does not necessarily mean profit for the nation; a military triumph can leave the people and the government far worse off than if there had been no war. Therefore any victory, as Sun-tzu insisted, must be economical. The sage military leader is the one who "fights without battles," who "creates victory out of opportunities offered by the enemy."

It is precisely here that intelligence is given its most important role and that the value of "strategems," repeatedly emphasized throughout the book, is most clearly illustrated. Strategems "are the struggle of wits in which intelligence copes with intelligence; they are unconventional but legitimate expedients, a method of war in which deception of the enemy is used as the only means to attain a predetermined objective. Under all conditions, favorable or unfavorable, they are the most valuable, most economical, and most effective activity of warfare." The author's pronouncement that strategems are to be used against enemy, neutral, and ally alike, together with his statement that there are inevitably differences of goals and policies between allies and "today's allies are tomorrow's enemies," shows the vigorous nationalism of his thinking. He believes that strategems are an aspect of strategy gravely neglected in Western studies.

It is unfortunate, with respect to these revelations of Chinese thought, that this authoritative book is not available in English. Since, however, the Chinese concepts of peculiar interest are scattered widely through the massive work, translation *in toto* or in significant part would hardly be worth while. For the Western student of intelligence it will probably remain little more than a reference, difficult of access.